CAPSULE SUMMARY

Johnston House
HA-2058
702 Choice Street Rockspring Ave.
Bel Air, Harford County
1931 c.
Private

This one-and-a-half story, wood-frame Craftsman style cottage has an L-shaped footprint with a 1970s recessed wing addition extending to side on the south elevation. The 1931 house rests on a solid random rubble foundation and the 1970s addition sits on a poured concrete foundation. The projecting front-gable roof caps two bays including the front entrance. The 1931 side ell contains one bay and the 1970s ell extending to the side is one bay wide. The walls are clad with wood shingles and rising above the slate tile roof is one exterior-side, shouldered stone chimney on the northwest elevation. The façade features an integral porch inset in the corner of the projecting front-gable section.

The Johnston House was built in the "Rock Spring Addition," which was platted in October 1931 in the northwest section of Bel Air. The lots on which 702 Rockspring Avenue was built was sold by Henry Webster to Robert and Dora Johnston in 1931. The Johnston House is significant as an atypical modest example of an early 1930s Craftsman cottage in Bel Air, Maryland. Its form and plan is not as common in Bel Air as the ubiquitous side-gable Craftsman bungalow of the 1930s. The dwellings built in the 1920s and 1930s in Bel Air are characteristic of modest one to two story houses similar to houses found in plan books of Gustav Stickley as well as mail order pattern books of Sears and Roebuck or the Aladdin Company. The Rock Spring Addition is significant exhibiting Bel Air's need to press residential development to the northern limits of the town. Additional developments such as the Rock Spring Addition during the late 1920s and early 1930s is a circumstance of the towns increased population possibly related to the of increase of industry such as the canning and trucking industries.

Inventory No. HA-2058

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

historic	Johnston House						
other							
2. Locatio	n						
street and numb	per 702 Rockspring	Avenue				not for	publication
city, town	Bel Air					vicinity	
county	Harford						
3. Owner	of Property	(give names and mailin	g addresses of all	owners)			
name	David and Debr	a Batzer					
street and num	ber 702 Rockspring	Avenue		teleph	none	N/A	
city, town	Bel Air	·	state MD	zip co	de	21014	
4. Locatio	n of Legal D	escription					
					C-11- 2	02	
courthouse, rec	istry of deeds, etc.	Bel Air Courthouse		liber 2390	tolio 3	83	
city, town	Bel Air Location of	tax map 30		63	N	D number	019314
city, town 5. Primary Co Co De De His	Bel Air Location of the properties of the prope	tax map 307 Additional Dat National Register District Local Historic District the National Register/Maryla the National Register/Maryla	and Register	and the second s	N		019314
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7. Description		Inventory No. HA-2058
Condition		
excellent	deteriorated	
\underline{X} good	ruins	
foir	altarad	

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Exterior Description

The Johnston House at 702 Rockspring Avenue is located at the northwest corner of Rockspring Avenue and Hall Street in Bel Air, Maryland. Facing east, this property is on a level grassy lot and the house is fronted with a few small foundation plantings. Several trees and shrubs surround the house and a paved driveway leads to the garage and a small parking lot at the rear of the house.

Built circa 1931, this one-and-a-half story, wood-frame cottage has an L-shaped footprint with a 1970s recessed wing addition extending to side on the south elevation. The 1931 house rests on a solid random rubble foundation and the 1970s addition sits on a poured concrete foundation. The projecting front-gable roof caps two bays including the front entrance. The 1931 side ell contains one bay and the 1970s ell extending to the side is one bay wide. The walls are clad with wood shingles and rising above the slate tile roof is one exterior-side, shouldered stone chimney on the northwest elevation. The façade features an integral porch inset in the corner of the projecting front-gable section. The porch is one-bay wide and is supported with square wood posts on stone piers featuring segmental-arched openings on its two sides. Other architectural features of the house include exposed roof rafters, overhanging eaves, and a stone porch floor. All window and door surrounds are clad in aluminum.

The façade, which faces east, is pierced on the first story with two sets of triple windows of 6/6 double-hung, wood-sash windows; one set is located in the projecting front-gable section and one on the opposite side of the entry in the side ell. Covered by the inset porch, a single-leaf, 6-light/2-panel wood door provides access to the interior from the east elevation. The upper half story in the gable of the east elevation contains one 9-light wood casement window. The east elevation of the recessed wing addition is pierced with one small 8-light, vinyl casement window.

The north elevation is five bays in length with an exterior-side stone chimney sited between the front two bays. The windows are of varying sizes and are not symmetrical in location. This elevation is pierced with one 6-light wood casement window, three 6/6 double-hung, wood-sash windows, and one window is boarded, which appears to have been a 6-light wood, casement window. The basement contains two 3-light, metal awning windows and there is a bulkhead entrance with double-leaf, vertical-board doors on this elevation.

The five-bays rear elevation does not feature symmetrical fenestration and contains a shed-roof vestibule added onto the front-gable block. The front-gable block caps the one-bay-wide vestibule and one 6-light, wood casement window. The vestibule contains one single-leaf, modern 9-light/2-panel wood door. The 1931 side ell is pierced with one 6/6 double-hung, wood-sash window, and one modern single-leaf, 9-light/2-panel wood door covered with a shed-roof overhang supported with knee braces. The rear elevation of the 1970s wing addition is pierced with one 8-light, vinyl casement window. The front gable section has one 9-light, wood casement attic window in the gable.

Piercing the first story of the south elevation of the main block are two 6-light, wood casement windows, and one set of triple windows in the 1970s wing addition. The upper half story is pierced with one set of triple windows similar to the first story. The basement contains one 3-light metal awning window. The south elevation of the vestibule is illuminated with one 6-light wood awning window. The south elevation of the wing addition contains three 6/6 double-hung, wood-sash windows, and a round louvered vent is located in the gable peak.

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Interior Description

Note: Interior photos were not taken at the request of the owner.

The floor plan of 702 Rockspring Avenue consists of a small center hall that provides access to each of the original rooms on the first floor. To the north of the hall/entry is the living room and to the south is the dining room. Two bedrooms are located off the hall on the north side and the kitchen is located on the south side of the hall to the rear of the house. At the end of the center hall is a bathroom and there is an enclosed stair to the attic on the south side of the hall. Access to the basement is in an enclosed stair on the east wall in the original kitchen. The rear vestibule opens into what originally was a small mud room with a closet and a shower room. At the time of the 2004 survey, this building is used as a law office. The living room, and each of the bedrooms are used as offices. The 1970s wing addition remains as a kitchen, whereas the original 1931 kitchen space is now an office. The closet in the rear vestibule was removed and this space is now used as a small waiting room. The shower room in the vestibule was changed to a restroom (the shower was removed). The upper floor and the basement are used only as storage spaces.

Each room in the house is similar and maintains all original materials except where noted. The original floors are $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide wood floorboards, and the baseboards found in each of the rooms (except where noted) are 6 inches high with a splayed base molding and a rounded shoe molding. The window and door surrounds are 5-inch wide, square-edged casings and the plaster walls and ceilings are painted. The doors are all original except for the two exterior doors on the rear elevation. The interior doors are wood, two-flush panel doors with brass knobs except for the doors to the dining room, which are French doors. There are no doors or doorways opening into the living room from the center hall.

The living room has a stone chimney breast with a jack-arch manteltree that features a center keystone. The hearth and chimney breast are both granite stone. A set of French wood doors (10-lights) open into the dining room from the center hall and a swinging two-flush panel door opens into the original kitchen space. The original kitchen space has its original wood floor and baseboard. There is a small inset spice shelf on the west wall and an ironing-board closet is located on the east wall. All kitchen appliances and counters have been removed in this space. The 1970s kitchen has a vinyl-tile floor covering, no baseboards, and marble countertops and wood cabinets/shelves. Each of the bedrooms contain a small closet. The bathroom at the west end of the hall has a ceramic tile floor and a small linen closet. The rear vestibule/waiting room connects to what was originally considered the master bedroom (the westernmost bedroom). The vestibule floor is covered with stone tiles. The bathroom in the vestibule has a sliding 2-panel door. The bathroom floor has been replaced with a ceramic tile floor and the square-edged casings are 2 ½ inches wide. The baseboard is 2 ½ inches high with a rounded shoe molding.

Secondary Resources

The circa 1931 wood-frame garage is one-story and one bay wide and rests on a poured concrete foundation. The walls are clad with weatherboard siding, and the front-gable roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles. It features a roll-up, vinyl-paneled garage door, exposed roof rafters, and cornerboards. The garage appears to be contemporary with the house.

8. Signification	ance			Inventory No. HA-2058
Period	Areas of Significance	Check and	justify below	
1600-1699 1700-1799 1800-1899 1900-1999 2000-	agriculture archeology X architecture art commerce communications X community planning conservation	 economics education engineering entertainment/ recreation ethnic heritage exploration/ settlement 	health/medicine industry invention landscape architecture law literature maritime history military	performing arts philosophy politics/government e religion science social history transportation other:
Specific dates	1931		Architect/Builder N/A	
Construction da	ites 1931			
Evaluation for:	National Register		Maryland Register	Xnot evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

Statement of Significance

The Johnston House is significant as an atypical modest example of an early 1930s Craftsman cottage in Bel Air, Maryland. The Rock Spring Addition to the Town of Bel Air, was platted in 1931, which appears to be the date of construction for the Johnston House. The Johnston House is a one-story, L-shaped cottage with an inset, corner porch and wide eaves. Its form and plan is not as common in Bel Air as the ubiquitous side-gable Craftsman bungalow of the 1930s. The dwellings built in the 1920s and 1930s in Bel Air are characteristic of modest one to two story houses similar to houses found in plan books of Gustav Stickley as well as mail order pattern books of Sears and Roebuck or the Aladdin Company. The Rock Spring Addition is significant exhibiting Bel Air's need to press residential development to the northern limits of the town. Additional developments such as the Rock Spring Addition during the late 1920s and early 1930s is a circumstance of the towns increased population possibly related to the of increase of industry such as the canning and trucking industries.

Development of Bel Air: Late 19th and Mid 20th Century

The proximity to Baltimore City, the arrival of the railroad, the introduction of the automobile, and improvement of roads allowed for greater prosperity within Harford County and particularly the Town of Bel Air. Bel Air was home to a building boom of the late nineteenth century and again after World War I. Hays, Richardson's, and the two Dallam's Additions are the primary residential developments of the late 19th century and early 20th century that took place within the Bel Air town limits.

Hays Addition is bounded on the south by Baltimore Pike, to the west by Archer Street, to the north by Thomas Street, and to the east by Bond Street. The Hays Addition was platted in 1886 and only three lots sold at this time. Between 1887 and 1917 only nine more lots were sold in this section of Bel Air. Marilynn M. Larew, historian, states that the reason for the slow building pace in Hays Addition could be the lots were priced much higher than lots in other sections of Bel Air such as in Dallam's Additions and Richardson's Addition.¹

¹ Marilynn M. Larew, Bel Air: An Architectural and Cultural History, 1782-1945 (Bel Air, MD: Town of Bel Air, 1995), p. 170.

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The boundaries for Richardson's Addition are Bond Street to the east, Alice Anne Street to the south, Richardson Street to the west, and Nichols Street on the north. Lots began selling in 1886, however, it was not officially platted and recorded until 1911. By 1917, fifteen houses stood along Alice Anne Street, which became an African-American working class neighborhood. Not including the dwellings on Alice Anne Street, seventeen houses were constructed in Richardson's Addition between 1914 and 1945.²

Major Dallam's Addition was platted in 1883 and the boundaries are the MA & PA Railroad to the south, Dallam Avenue to the north, Rockspring Avenue to the east, and several lots past Mast Street to the west. Due to the proximity to the railroad, several lots were built upon for industrial and commercial uses as well as worker's housing. Dallam's second addition is located to the north of Dallam's first addition including Roland Avenue, Rockspring Avenue, and Hall Street. In the late 1880s, the west side of Rockspring Avenue was built upon followed by construction on Roland Avenue after 1890. Eleven houses were constructed in Dallam's second addition between 1885 and 1914.

Following World War I, Bel Air prospered with numerous suburban developments on the outskirts of the downtown core. Three of the larger additions to Bel Air during the 1920s include Fulford Park (1922), Ingleside (1923), and Kenmore (1924). The area that is Fulford Park originally was made up of 18 acres running from Main Street and Fulford Avenue, South to Linwood Avenue, and East to Ewing Street. Other streets included in Fulford Park are Maitland Street and Powell Avenue. Unlike the slow development of the late 19th century developments of Hays and Richardson's Additions, the lots in Fulford Park sold quickly and construction began immediately. The real estate agents responsible for selling the lots of Fulford Park advertised and auctioned the lots on one day in 1922 soon after it was platted. One hundred thirty six lots sold in one day bringing in a total of \$12,000.

The area known as Ingleside off North Hickory Avenue is bounded by Wright Street to the south and McCormick Lane to the north. This section of Bel Air was subdivided and platted by J. Edwin Webster, son of Colonel Edwin Hanson Webster, in April 1923. Oliver T. Wallace and Samuel Dameron were the real estate agents responsible for the sales. According to Larew, Ingleside was the "place to build between the wars" and continued to expand after 1945. Similar to Fulford Park, Ingleside held an auction to handle the sales of the lots which occurred in April or May of 1923. Ingleside developed rapidly, much more so than any other previous development made to Bel Air. According to Larew, the "first two blocks on East Broadway and Webster were full" by the end of the 1920s. A total of sixteen houses were constructed in the 1920s—"faster than any previous addition in town."

In 1919, Robert and Anne Heighe purchased 99 acres of Hanway's farm, which was platted in 1924 by the local real estate firm of Vaughn, Warren, and Wells, using their namesake for the subdivision. Today, the addition is better known

² Marilynn M. Larew, Bel Air: An Architectural and Cultural History, 1782-1945 (Bel Air, MD: Town of Bel Air, 1995), p. 172.

³ Marilynn M. Larew, Bel Air: An Architectural and Cultural History, 1782-1945 (Bel Air, MD: Town of Bel Air, 1995), pp. 173-

⁴ Marilynn M. Larew, Bel Air: An Architectural and Cultural History, 1782-1945 (Bel Air, MD: Town of Bel Air, 1995), pp. 181-183.

⁵ Marilynn M. Larew, Bel Air: An Architectural and Cultural History, 1782-1945 (Bel Air, MD: Town of Bel Air, 1995), pp. 181-181.

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as the Kenmore addition. The lots were auctioned on September 22, 1924 and a total of 199 lots were sold equaling \$19,500.

Due to the building boom in Harford County in the 1920s and 1930s, the pre-World War I developments in Bel Air were being steadily built upon similar to the new developments of the early 1920s. A section of Dallam's second addition, which includes Hall Street, was re-surveyed and platted in 1931 as the Rock Spring Addition. This new plat consisted of two blocks with a total of 102 lots and is bounded to the north by Vale Road, to the east by Rockspring Avenue, to the south by Hall Street, and to the west by Roland Avenue. Robinson Street runs north south and connects Hall Street to Vale Road, originally called Bel Air-Watervale Road. Block A of Rockspring Addition was platted with fifty-five lots, the majority of which are equal size of twenty-five feet wide and 100 feet deep. Block B of this addition contains forty-seven lots, most of which were of similar size to the lots in Block A.

After the platting of the Rock Spring Addition, several more residential developments were constructed within the town limits. Development slowed dramatically between the mid-1930s and the early 1950s. Because of the Town's proximity and association to the Aberdeen Proving Ground, a U.S. Army Installation Management Agency, Bel Air experienced a remarkable population decline during the mid- to late-1940s due to the Proving Ground downsizing after World War II. In the early 1950s, Bel Air regained its population numbers as it was experiencing in the 1930s and numerous developments occurred during the 1950s and early 1960s including such examples as Howard Park (1951), Shamrock (1955), and Homestead Village (early 1960s).

Johnston House

The Johnston House, at 702 Rockspring Avenue, is located in the Third District of Harford County within the Town of Bel Air, Maryland. The house at 702 Rockspring Avenue was built in the "Rock Spring Addition," which was platted in October 1931 in the northwest section of Bel Air. The lots on which 702 Rockspring Avenue was built was sold by Henry Webster to Robert and Dora Johnston in 1931. This land that Henry Webster owned may originally have been an orchard farm according to several oral histories. According to the 1930 Federal Census, Henry Webster was a single, retired man at the age of 74 and lived in a boarding house on Main Street that was run by Jennie H. Forwood. Webster sold the lots to Robert N. and Dora Johnston in December 1931, several months after the plat date of Rock Spring Addition. Robert Johnston was originally from Northern Ireland and immigrated in 1878 at the age of 22. At the time of 1930 census, Robert was 67 years of age and Dora was 44 years old. The couple had been married for four years and just prior to moving to 702 Rockspring Avenue they resided at the Aberdeen Proving Ground. In Aberdeen, Robert Johnston worked as a store keeper for a warehouse and Dora was not employed. The Johnston's lived at 702 Rockspring Avenue until their deaths. Dora was widowed and remained at the house until she died on February 19, 1970. The property was then sold to Mary B. McComas (Dora Johnston's sister) and others in 1971. McComas died in 1979 and soon afterwards the property was conveyed to Mary Ann B. O'Connell and her husband Daniel O'Connell. During this time the property was used as a rental. The Batzers purchased the Johnston House from the O'Connell's in 1995 and currently use the house as the David Batzer Law Offices.

⁶ Aegis, February 20, 1970.

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Chain-of-Title

All information taken from the Bel Air Courthouse

June 3, 1908

Grantor: William H. Harlan, and other, Trustees

Grantee: Harriet A. Webster Deed Book WSF 125 Folio 98

July 28, 1923

Grantor: John A. Russell Grantee: Edwin H. Webster Deed Book DGW 183 Folio 253

Mortgage for 8 acre tract

November 24, 1931

Grantor: William H. Harlan, Trustee and Executor of Edwin H. Webster's will

Grantee: Henry Webster

Deed Book SWC 221 Folio 351

December 1, 1931

Grantor: Henry Webster

Grantee: Dora Johnston and Robert M. Johnston

Deed Book 221 Folio 367

February 19, 1970

Grantor: Dora Johnston Grantee: Mary B. McComas Will Book T.L.A. 31 Folio 288

November 18, 1971

Grantor: Charles J. Kunkel, Personal Representative of the Estate of Dora B. Johnston

Grantee: Mary B. McComas, et al

Deed Book 886 Folio 677

June 24, 1980

Grantor: Mary Ann B. O'Connell

Grantee: Mary Ann B. O'Connell and Daniel H. O'Connell

Deed Book 1122 Folio 840

April 24, 1995

Grantor: Mary Ann Bauer O'Connell and Daniel H. O'Connell

Grantee: David and Debra Batzer

Deed Book 2390 Folio 383

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. HA-2058

Bel Air Courthouse, Land Records. Bel Air, MD

Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company of Baltimore City. Harford County Telephone Directory, 1936, 1950-1951, 1951-1952,1963, Baltimore City, MD.

Harford County Historical Society. Vertical Files. Bel Air, MD.

Larew, Marilynn M. Bel Air: An Architectural and Cultural History, 1782-1945. Bel Air, MD: Town of Bel Air, MD, 1995.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. The Census of 1920-1930, Harford County, Maryland. Census searched from

http://persi.heritagequestonline.com/hqoweb/library (7 December 2004).

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property _	1.10 acres		
Acreage of historical setting	1.10 acres		
Quadrangle name	Bel Air, MD	Quadrangle scale:	1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Johnston House is located at 702 Rockspring Avenue in the Town of Bel Air, Maryland in the Third District of Harford County. It is associated with tax map 307 parcel 63 and is located in the Rock Spring Addition to Bel Air on Block B at the southwest corner of Hall Street.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Kristie Baynard/Architectural Historian		
organization	Arcadia Preservation, LLC	date	December 1, 2004
street & number	1209 Powhatan Street	telephone	703.798.8124
city or town	Fredericksburg	state	VA

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

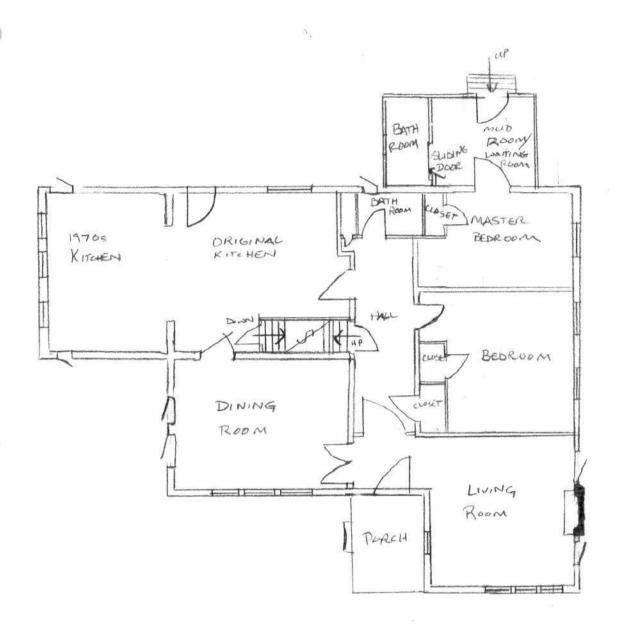
The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:

Maryland Historical Trust DHCD/DHCP 100 Community Place Crownsville, MD 21032-2023 410-514-7600

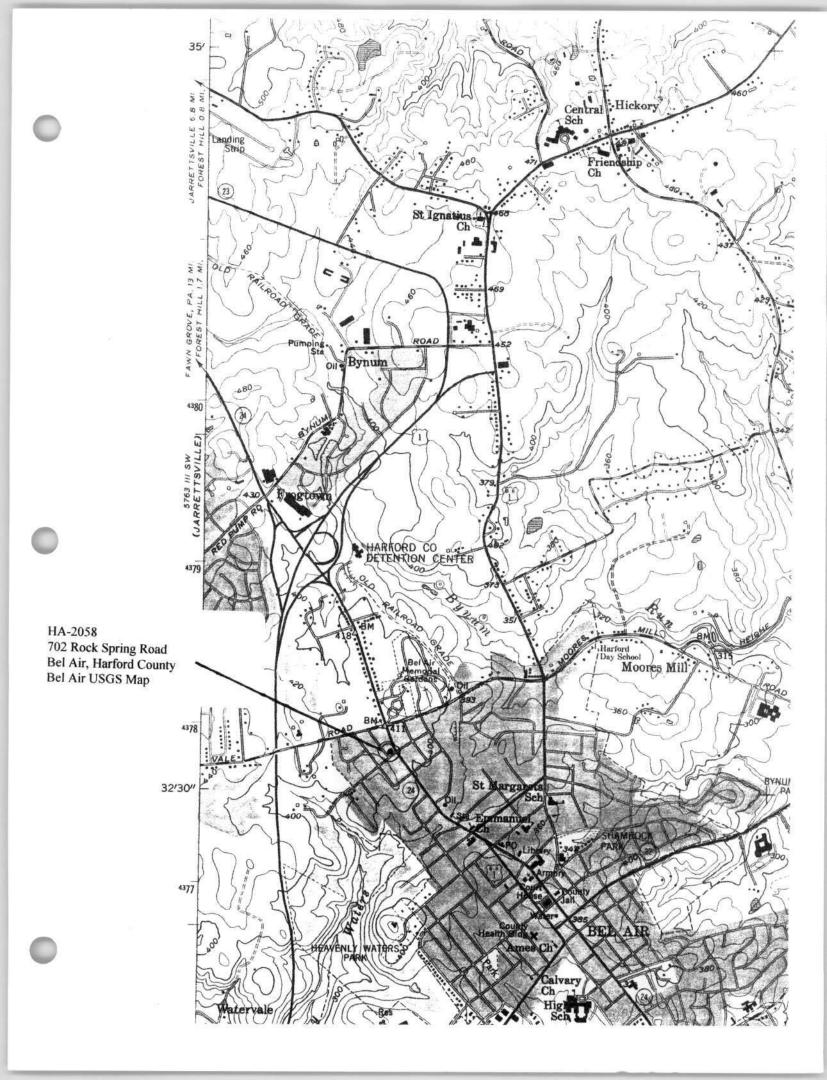
Robinson Street PAVED LOT 1 0000 Rock Spring Avenue

HA-2058 Conneton House 702 Rockspring Avenue Bel Dr. ND Harford County CN



HA 2058
JOHNSTON HOUSE
1702 ROCKSpring AND
Bel Air MAD
Harford County
16t Floor Plan
NOT TO SCALE

ND





HA- 2058
JOHNSTON HOUSE
YOU ROCK Spring Are
Harford County, Bel Air, MB
Areadia Presonation
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MD SHPO
NE ELEVATION



Ha-2098
Johnston House
702 Rock Spring Ave
Harford Country, Bel Air, MD
Areadia Presentation
11/2004
MD SHPO
NW ELEVATION



HA-2058
JOHNSTON HOUSE
702 ROCK Spring Ave
Harford County MD
Areadia Preservation
11/2004
MD SHPO
SWELENATION



HA- 2058
JOHNSTON HOUSE
702 ROCK Spring AVE,
Harford County, Bel Air, MD
Arcadia Preservation
M/2004
MD SHPO
SOUTH CORNER